

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 OMB-01 /100 W
-----089545 071746Z /43

R 071300Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9516
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 0960

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT BF
SUBJ: ELECTIONS

REF: NASSAU 0898 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY. WITH LESS THAN TWO WEEKS TO GO UNTIL GENERAL ELECTIONS THE ATMOSPHERE HERE IS STILL SUBDUED, AND APATHY RATHER THAN PARTISAN FEVER IS THE GENERAL RULE. BOTH OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE SOME HEADWAY AND IN SOME INSTANCES THEY ARE OUT DRAWING THE PLP AT RECENT RALLIES IN NEW PROVIDENCE AS WELL AS THE OUT ISLANDS. IT SEEMS INEVITABLE THAT THEY, TOGETHER WITH THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES, WILL MAKE CONSIDERABLE INROADS INTO THE PLP'S LOPSIDED MAJORITY IN THE LAST ASSEMBLY. PRIME MINISTER PINDLING HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO TURN ON THE OLD CHARISMA AND THIS FACTOR, MORE THAN ANY OTHER, GIVES SOME PLAUSIBILITY TO THE PREDICTIONS OF SOME OF HIS DETRACTORS THAT THE ELECTION IS TOO CLOSE TO CALL OR THAT IT MIGHT EVEN PRODUCE
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AN UPSET. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES CONTINUE TO TALK IN SLOGANS AND GENERALITIES AND WHILE THE PLP IS STILL ON THE DEFENSIVE ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND CORRUPTION, THE OPPOSITION IN OUR VIEW HAS NOT BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL IN EXPLOITING THESE ISSUES AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN. THIS IS LARGELY THE RESULT BOTH OF THE

PLP'S ABILITY TO DEFLECT AND CLOUD THE ISSUES AND THE
OPPOSITION'S INABILITY TO REFRAIN FROM USING SHOTGUN TACTICS
IN A SITUATION WHERE THE WISEST COURSE DEMANDS SELECTIVITY
IN TARGETING. THE MOST SEARCHING EXAMINATION OF THE REAL
ISSUES FACING THE BAHAMAS WAS MADE BEFORE A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE
AT NASSAU'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL ON JULY 3 WHEN BISHOP ELDON
DELIVERED HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLED SYNOD.
SPEAKING TO A CROWD THAT INCLUDED MRS. PINDLING AND HER
FAMILY, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MRS. HANNA, ASSORTED
CABINET MINISTERS AND THE LEADER OF THE BDP, SENATOR BOSTWICK,
ELDON CALLED ON ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT
TO VOTE AS A CHRISTIAN DUTY. HE WENT ON TO: 1. EXPRESS
CONCERN WITH THE OVER POPULATION AND OVER DEVELOPMENT OF
NEW PROVIDENCE (NASSAU) AND HIS HOPE THAT ANY NEW GOVERNMENT
WOULD CHANNEL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TO THE OUT ISLANDS;
2. CALL FOR GREATER EFFORTS TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT, PARTI-
CULARLY AMONG YOUTH WARNING THAT FAILURE TO STRENGTHEN
THE ECONOMY THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF LIGHT INDUSTRY
..."COULD LEAD TO MUCH UNREST IN THE COUNTRY";
3. APPEAL TO ALL POLITICIANS, IN VIEW OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS
OF CORRUPTION..."TO SERVE THEIR FELLOWMEN AND THEIR
COUNTRY RATHER THAN SIMPLY TO SEEK FOR PERSONAL GAIN;"
4. EXPRESS HOPE THAT THE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF FAMILY
PLANNING WHICH IS "EXTREMELY RELEVANT AT THIS TIME AND
IMPORTANT FOR THE WELL BEING OF THE COUNTRY" NOT BECOME
A POLITICAL ISSUE BUT BE DISCUSSED SOBERLY AND RESPONSIBLY
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OUTSIDE THE HEAT OF A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

3. IN OTHER POLITICALLY CONNECTED EVENTS THE PLP, WITH
OBVIOUS POLITICALLY INSPIRED TIMING, OPENED UP THE
FIRST BAHAMIAN TV STATION ON JULY 4TH TO MIXED REVIEWS;
THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED RADIO AND TV STATION REFUSED
TO GIVE LIVE COVERAGE TO A BDP "CONVENTION" WHICH WAS
SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS WEEK FORCING THE PARTY TO CALL
IN CHANNEL 10 FROM MIAMI TO FILM THE MEETING AND SUPPOSEDLY
R
AIR IT PRIOR TO ELECTION; WALL STREET JOURNAL STAFF WRITER
RAYMOND JOSEPH WHO WAS DEPORTED AND PUT ON THE BAHAMIAN
STOP LIST IN THE LATE SIXTIES FOR HIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT
WITH THE THEN "HACTIAN COALITION" AND THE MURDER OF A
HAITIAN CONSULAR OFFICER IN FREEPORT) HAS REAPPEARED IN
NASSAU AND IS AGAIN TO BE DEPORTED; AND THE BDP HAS
PUBLICLY ENDORSED SEVEN FNM CANDIDATES RUNNING IN CON-
STITUENCIES WHERE THE FORMER FIELDED NONE OF ITS OWN.
FINALLY, FNM LEADER WHITFIELD HAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED
THE GOVERNMENT FOR ALLEGEDLY SPENDING 16 MILLION "TO
EQUIP THE DEFENSE FORCE WITH GUNBOATS" AND AFTER DISMISSING
THE NEED "TO TRAIN THEM" ON HAITI, CUBA MUCH LESS THE

U.S. FACILITIES, RHETORICALLY QUESTIONED WHETHER THEY WOULD BE "TRAINED ON BAHAMIANS."

4. THUS FAR FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS, FISHING ZONES, IRS ACTIVITIES PAST AND PRESENT, NOR ANY OF THE OTHER ISSUES EFFECTING BAHAMIAN-AMERICAN BILATERAL RELATIONS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP IN THE CAPAIGN AND HOPEFULLY WILL NOT BE INTRODUCED DURING THE NEXT 13 DAYS. WITH REGARD TO THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS THE BDP PLATFORM STATES THAT AMERICAN BASES AND TRACKING STATIONS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN GIVEN THE FACT THAT "SUCH BASES ARE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE BAHAMAS ECONOMICALLY AS WELL AS FOR OUR DEFENSE." THE FNM IS LESS SPECIFIC STATING ONLY "THAT WE SHOULD HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USA SINCE OUR
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ECONOMY IS CLOSELY LINKED WITH THAT COUNTRY AND SINCE OUR TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY DEPENDS ON AMERICAN'S DISPOSITION TOWARD US." THE INCUMBENT PLP FAILS TO ADDRESS THE MATTER.
TAYLOR

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NNN

Message Attributes

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